Author: Lori Ann Iannotti

Unit: Plate Tectonics

**Title:**

What is Plate Tectonics?

**Lesson Overview**

This lesson will explore the theory of plate tectonics. It will explain what plates are, what the plate tectonic theory is, and it will all be related back to the structure of the earth.

**Objectives**

**Materials**

Computer to show the video

Paper and pencils

A few hard-boiled eggs

Map activity sheet

**Links to Resources**

Movie about plate tectonics <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsZq1pNufNg>

Power point slides

Map activity sheet

**Safety Issues**

**Instruction**

**Opening**

When the students arrive cracked hard-boiled eggs will be passed around the classroom. Students will make observations about the egg and write them in their notebook. We will then quickly review the information about the structure of the earth that was learned the day before, and generate more questions if necessary. Students will then pass in their work.

**Learning Activities**

Students will watch a movie about how the earth was formed. This video will let the students relate the formation of the earth to the structure of the earth. The video will also explain how the plate tectonics shape the earth itself. The video also doubles as a frontloading exercise for other future lessons that will be covered in this unit.

(10 minutes)

The teacher will lead a discussion about the video. Students will be encouraged to make observation about the video, and ask questions. Does anyone know what the Greek word tekton means? What are plates? How were the landforms created that we saw in the video? What is the theory of plate tectonics? What is a scientific theory? How do the plates relate to the observations we made about the egg at the start of class? Take a few notes in their notebooks on slides.

(10 minutes)

Students will then pair off and work at an exercise at interpreting maps. The map is on page 33 of the Prentice Hall Science Explorer, Inside Earth. The teacher will walk around the room while the students are working to informally assess if the students are grasping the topic.

(15 minutes)

**Closing**

A discussion will be held to discuss what the students learned about plate tectonics and relate it back to the structure of the earth. During the discussion we will check the board to see if we had the answers to any more of the questions that were generated from yesterday’s lesson.

**Assessment**

Students will be informally assessed during the map activity. The teacher should take note of any misconceptions or common areas of difficulty with the material and address them during the closing discussion.

**Homework**

Students will complete the map interpretation activity for homework if they did not complete it in class.

**Additional Notes**